

REMARKS

By way of this amendment accompanying a Request for Continuing Examination (RCE), claims 1, 11 and 12 have been amended in a minor way without affecting the scope of those claims, and new claims 17-39 have been added.

Therefore, claims 1-14 and 17-39 are presently pending for consideration.

Please note that claims 1-14 were allowed, as indicated in a Notice of Allowance mailed October 27, 2003. The amendments to claims 1, 11 and 12 do not affect the scope of those claims, and thus claims 1-14 should still be in allowable form.

New claims 17-28 are directed to a device controller, and new claim 29 is directed to a device control acquisition system. New claims 30-39 correspond to originally-filed claims 1-10, whereby originally-filed claims 1-10 were canceled in a Reply filed on July 8, 2003.

In an Office Action mailed April 8, 2003, then-pending claims 1-3 and 5-8, which corresponded to presently pending claims 30-32 and 34-37, were rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,466,549 to Hattig; then-pending claim 9, which corresponds to presently pending claim 38, was rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hattig; and then-pending claim 4, which corresponds to presently pending claim 33, was rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hattig in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,445,711 to Scheel. These rejections, to the extent that they may be applied to presently pending claims 30-38, are traversed for at least the reasons given below.

The Office Action asserted that column 4, lines 58-67 and column 5, lines 1-7 of Hattig disclosed an information discarding step of, when at least one of the remote busses is disconnected from the network, discarding device information of devices connected to the remote bus. However, this assertion is incorrect.

In particular, column 5, lines 58-67 of Hattig discloses a case where a global bus id is output by a discovering device 406, whereby all devices connected to all buses on the network respond to the global bus id to let the discovering device 406 know that they are currently on the network. Column 6, lines 1-3 of Hattig discloses that the discovering device 406, upon receiving the responses from all of the devices on the network, maintains a list of these devices on the network as well as the services included within each device. Nowhere is there a suggestion of an information discarding being performed by Hattig's discovering device 406. Also, Scheel (which was cited with Hattig with respect to original claim 4) does not disclose or suggest such features.

Therefore, for at least the reasons given above, presently pending claim 30 is patentable over the cited art of record. Claims 31-39 are patentable due to their respective dependencies on claim 30, as well as for the specific features recited in those claims.

Similarly, new apparatus claims 17-28 and new system claim 29 recite information discarding means for, when at least one of the remote buses is disconnected from the network, discarding device information of devices connected to the disconnected remote bus. Neither Hattig nor Scheel discloses or suggests such features. Accordingly, claims 17-29 are also patentable over the cited art of record.

Therefore, this application is believed to be in condition for allowance. The examiner is invited to contact the undersigned to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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